



NEWS RELEASE

**STATE BOARD
OF EQUALIZATION**

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California 95814

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: July 5, 2006
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**CHIANG'S OFFICE PROVIDES FREE HELP COMPLETING
HOMEOWNER AND RENTER ASSISTANCE FORMS**

The Franchise Tax Board (FTB) announced that the Homeowner and Renter Assistance Program that provides qualified seniors and disabled individuals with a once-a-year payment of up to nearly \$500 starts July 1.

"Many Californians benefit from this program," said Board of Equalization Chair and FTB member John Chiang. "For the 2005 claim year, the FTB issued checks totaling more than \$180 million to more than 600,000 elderly, disabled, students, and hard-working families."

Chiang added that his staff provides free assistance in filling out HRA forms. Appointments can be made by calling his office at (213) 239-8506 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. "And this year for the first time the FTB is providing the instructions in Spanish, Chinese, and Korean," he noted. Translated copies are available thorough an FTB link to Chiang's website, <http://www.boe.ca.gov/members/chiang/taxsrv/hraprog.htm>.

RAMON J. HIRSIG
Executive Director

To qualify, homeowners must have owned and lived in their home at the end of 2005, have a household income of \$40,811 or less, or gross income of \$74,200 or less. Gross income includes household income plus all non-cash expenses such as depreciation, amortization, and depletion; expenses generally incurred by business owners. Other requirements include being a U.S. citizen, designated alien, or qualified alien when the claim is filed. Claimants must have been blind, disabled, or at least 62 years old on December 31, 2005. Renters must pay \$50 or more in rent per month and meet the same income limits and residency rules.

The Homeowner and Renter Assistance Program benefits is based on the amount of property taxes paid by homeowners and indirectly paid by renters. Eligible homeowners can receive a payment of up to \$472.60, while renters can receive up to \$347.50. The FTB began mailing claim booklets in mid-June to prior year recipients. Eligible individuals can also get the claim form from the FTB's Website at www.ftb.ca.gov. The FTB runs the program from July 1 through October 16, although claims can be filed as late as June 30, 2007. To avoid payment-processing delays, the FTB strongly advises claimants to file by the October deadline.

Another program of interest to qualified homeowners is the [Property Tax Postponement Program](#). Available through the State Controller's Office, this program allows eligible homeowners to postpone payment of their property taxes on their principal place of residence. For more information regarding this program, visit the State Controller's Website at www.sco.ca.gov.

Free help is available for completing the claim forms. To locate help, visit the FTB's Website, which lists the locations and hours for the statewide volunteer sites, call your local Senior Citizens Information and Referral Service, or call your state legislator's office. Also, the FTB answers questions and provides general assistance over the phone by calling (800) 868-4171.

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